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## A NEW EDITION OF THE PLAYS OF AUGUSTUS THOMAS

**L**AST month appeared the following five of a new edition of the plays of Mr. Augustus Thomas published by Samuel French of New York and London: "The Witching Hour," "In Miz-zoura," "Mrs. Leffingwell's Boots," "Oliver Goldsmith," "The Earl of Pawtucket." Others are to follow.

Each one of these small volumes is enriched with a preface by Mr. Thomas himself showing why he wrote his plays, how he built them up and surmounted all sorts of difficulties. This is not only an illuminating feature of this new edition but is unique in the history of the drama for an artist to unveil the processes by which he arrived at his results.

Aside from the general interest this new edition of Mr. Thomas's plays must arouse, these prefaces will be extremely helpful to students of the art of play building.

A perusal of these prefaces now confirms the conviction which has been tentatively expressed by many from time to time, that Augustus Thomas is the greatest playwright this country has produced. And we have no hesitancy in saying that, according to our standard of art measurements, "The Witching Hour" is the greatest of all American dramas. While other playwrights have created some fine dramas—which we will take pleasure in noticing later—no American play has reached the high level of this drama.

As a subject it deals with one of the highest interests of the race—the absolute necessity of self-control, which Herbert Spencer says is "man's highest achievement"; then the noble way in which the subject is conceived; its splendid composition; its profound expression of the central idea; its exquisite love story and variety of emotional color; the firmness and largeness with which the char-

acters are drawn—and its faultless technique make this play America's masterpiece of dramatic art.

This may even now be a platitude. But what may be new to the public is—that no American dramatist has shown the extraordinary range of Mr. Thomas. In this he differs from and unquestionably leads other playwrights of America.

In addition to several dramatizations of novels such as "Chimmie Fadden," "Soldiers of Fortune," etc., note the great stirring Western melodrama "Arizona"; then the fine character play "In Miz-zoura"; the pathetic and pastoral drama "Alabama," in which he did so much to assuage the lingering ill feeling between the North and the South and which helped greatly to bring the sections together, a truly national, social service of incalculable value, which alone should endear him to the nation. Note the delicious laughter-compelling comedies like "The Other Girl" and "The Earl of Pawtucket"; the screaming farcical comedies of the "Mrs. Leffingwell's Boots" and "On the Quiet" type. Then consider the semi-historical comedy of manners "Oliver Goldsmith"; and finally the exalting psychological and sociological plays like "As a Man Thinks" and, greatest of all, we repeat "The Witching Hour."

This is a record unattained by any other American dramatist and the National Institute of Arts and Letters, of which Mr. Thomas is a member, did him simple justice when, two years ago, it chose him as the first recipient of the Academy Medal for the Drama.

Wishing to have an expression of opinion of Mr. Thomas's methods from perhaps the highest authority on the theatre in the United States, Mr. Brander Matthews, we requested of him a short review of this new edition and he kindly sent us the critique we publish on another page.

## "EVENING" AND "GLORIA VICTIS"

SCULPTURES BY F. WELLINGTON RUCKSTUHL

(See frontispiece and opposite page)

**T**HIS month's frontispiece engraving by Mr. Cole—the last one to appear in the first year of THE ART WORLD—is after the statue "Evening" by F. Wellington Ruckstuhl. We print also a half-tone of another of his works: "Gloria Victis." They speak for themselves.

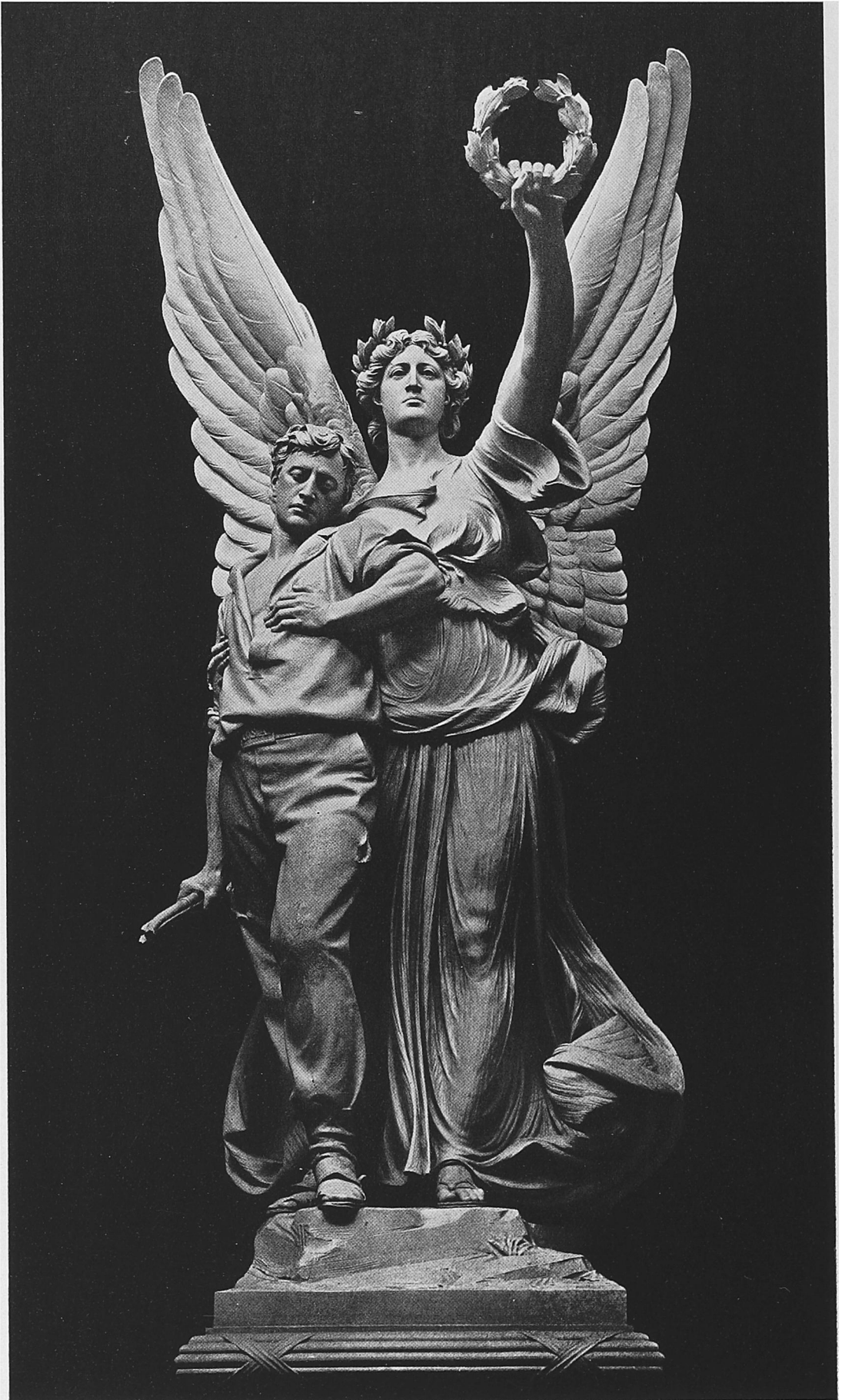
Mr. Ruckstuhl belongs to that school of artists who deplore extremes—both in idealism and realism, claiming that extremes in either direction are unhealthy, and that all enduring art must be sufficiently real to satisfy our hunger for truth, and ideal enough to lift us above the commonplace and ugly. His marble "Evening," a statue larger than life, exemplifies this point of view.

Asked for his intention in making this statue he said: "Everything in nature folds at evening, flowers, birds and trees, even the grass as well as animals and mankind. This folding has been sug-

gested by the movements and lines of this statue, in the face of which we see suggested the approach of sleep. Aside from that, it is a study in beautiful lines and forms, and finally, it is an attempt to prove that a statue can be completely nude yet profoundly chaste in spirit."

We learn that the plaster model of this, his first statue, was exhibited in the Paris Salon in 1888 where it received an Honorable Mention. It was exhibited in the marble by the Society of American Artists at New York in 1893, and thence was sent to the Chicago World's Fair where it received one of the eleven Grand Medals there given. Later it went to the Metropolitan Museum where it remained for sixteen years.

As for the "Gloria Victis" it was first known as "The Spirit of the Confederacy" but later the title was changed. It is a bronze group fourteen feet



"GLORIA VICTIS"  
Bronze Group on Confederate Monument, Baltimore  
BY F. WELLINGTON RUCKSTUHL

(See opposite page)

high and surmounts the Confederate Monument at Baltimore.

As to this group the sculptor says: "My conception was this: The Confederacy is symbolized by the dying soldier who having decided to fight to a finish throws away his hat and coat and rolls up his sleeves. Though his clothes are worn and full of bullet holes he continues fighting even when his gun is shot to pieces—until the fatal bullet hits him. Then he mechanically places his hand to his heart, makes an effort to keep from falling and to die like a man. Fame then swoops down and clasps him to her breast while she holds aloft a crown and seems to say: 'Hold! Enough, he belongs to me!'"

"It was an effort to express the dauntless valor of the Southern soldier which will ever be an exalting heritage for all our people."

Mr. Ruckstuhl was born in Alsace in 1853 of French-Huguenot stock, came to St. Louis in 1855 where he was brought up. In 1885 he went to Paris and studied in the Académie Julien under Boulanger and Lefebvre for two years, then became a pupil of Tholenaar and later of Mercié in the Académie

Rolland. He returned to St. Louis in 1888 and went back to Paris for three years more to carve his "Evening" in marble. Returning to America to settle in New York in 1893 he has lived there ever since except during six years off and on spent near Paris in executing monuments for this country. In 1900 he went on a long trip to the Orient and on his return became Director of Sculpture for the St. Louis World's Fair from which post he resigned after his plans for the decoration of the buildings and grounds had been highly praised by the advisory committee consisting of sculptors Ward, Saint-Gaudens and French.

He was one of those who helped organize and develop the National Sculpture Society, the National Arts Club and the Municipal Art Society of New York. He is also a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters. Besides executing a score of monuments in various parts of the country, he has through lectures and his pen stimulated the development in America of a taste for art of the highest kind.

## HANDS OFF CENTRAL PARK!

HOW very difficult it is to preserve the original purpose of a public building or park, amid the streams of purpose or sentiment that flow to and fro, may be seen from the proposals concerning Central Park, Manhattan, which start ever young and ever newly audacious with each recurring moon. These proposals vary between extremes. Some envisage with exultation the turning of the greater part of this unrealized real estate into nice properties sold to millionaires for huge sums, separated by broad north and south avenues, with wide east and west streets along which may dash limousines of the proper speed and build. Such plans would have Central Park merely a West End for fat burghers. Others take the indignant stand of the man whose heart bleeds (but not his pocket) at the plight of the poor, especially the poor who can buy the philanthropist's penny-sheet, and these love to go the whole length and would surrender Central Park to the untrammelled instincts of children and of slaves only lately escaped from their European taskmasters. Doubtless these reformers themselves never use Central Park. So that they can advise turning all the greensward into playground, and every lake into baths for the million. Instead of looking elsewhere for really practical grounds and practical baths; instead of urging their fellow philanthropists to endow Manhattan with baths and playgrounds in or near the most populous centers, they find it easier to suggest the costliest and most destructive method and that which will produce the largest quantity of ugliness to the acre.

Democracy, like every magnificent growth, has its host of "friends" who are but enemies in disguise.

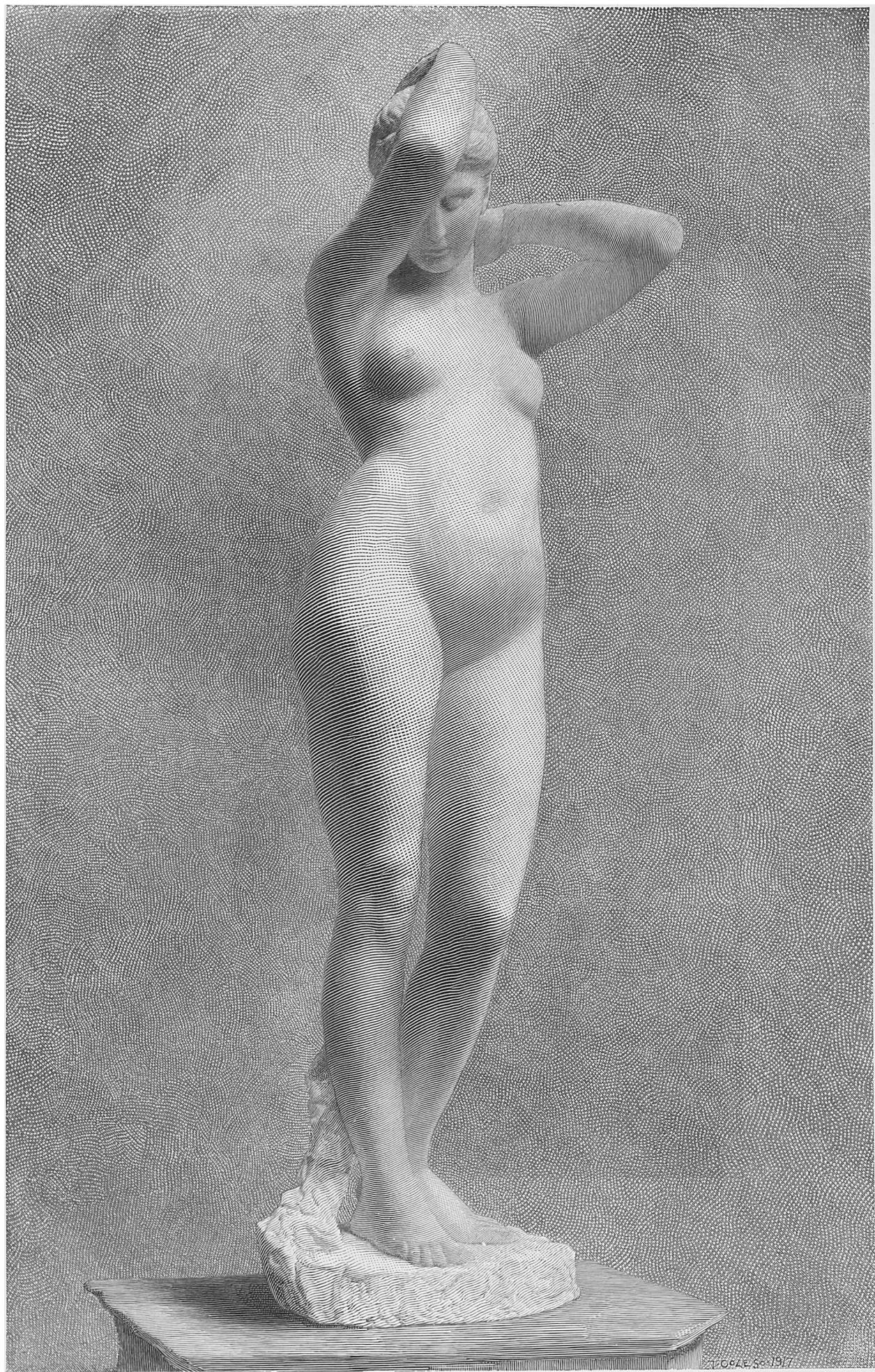
Under pretence of kindness to teeming millions these enemies would deprive the millions of what is needed above all, namely quiet, serenity, verdure, the beauty of trees, flowers, hills and vales, of

lakes and glades, the *rus in urbe* after which most men pent in cities long. Fixed in the narrow walls of their reforming freak, they lack imagination and utterly misconstrue the purpose and office of such a spot as Central Park. But let us to the point:

The thirty-six acres occupied by the reservoirs in Central Park should not be turned aside from the main purpose of the park, but with the most scrupulous care be made to adjust themselves to that purpose—which is to afford rest and relaxation to men, women, and children of every condition. Now, that can not be accomplished if the tract recovered from the Croton system is turned to things that induce crowding, ugliness and noise. Between the plan of a sunken garden and that of a Coney Island riot of noise there lies a middle course in which the true interests of the whole body of citizens will be found. This does not exclude fountains and water, groves and band stands, provision for open-air popular singing; but it should rigidly exclude the drawing together of huge crowds to trample down and ruin grass and foliage and drive from its precincts the adults and children who seek relief from the noise and danger of crowded streets.

In talking about the poor many indulge in impertinence without realizing it. There are plenty of noisy places in reach of the poor at the cost of five cents, and we see how they patronize them in their thousands. But what of the hundreds who long for peace and quiet? It is they who turn to Central and Prospect and Van Cortlandt Parks, where they find people with kindred tastes, self-respecting and quiet people, who seek a safe place for the children and duly deck them out in pretty clothes to the best of their ability and send them to the parks where there is fun for the young but where order and decency are preserved. Shall we allow these health-giving places to be wrested from the purpose for which they were planned and made





BY F. WELLINGTON RUCKSTUHL, SCULPTOR

ENGRAVED BY TIMOTHY COLE

"EVENING"

(See page 502)